

REMARKS

The applicant has carefully considered the Office action dated September 24, 2004 and the references it cites. By way of this Response, claim 18 has been cancelled without prejudice to its further prosecution. In view of the following, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Office action identifies two inventions in the claim set, namely, the invention of claims 1-17 (Group I), and the invention of claim 18 (Group II). Applicant hereby elects Group I (i.e., claims 1-17) for further prosecution in this case without traverse. Accordingly, claim 18 has been cancelled and may be pursued in a divisional application.

If the Examiner is of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

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